

# 11

## (Navaka Upagantabba) Kula Sutta

The Discourse on the Family (Worth Approaching, the Nines) | A 9.17/4:387 f

Theme: Nine conditions when a family may be approached

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007, 2011

### 1 Conditions for non-decline

**1.1 HOSPITALITY. The (Navaka Upagantabba) Kula Sutta** (A 9.17) is a rare discourse on the nature of hospitality (*paṭisanthāra*). Although this is the last respect of the six, its spirit, like spiritual friendship,<sup>1</sup> pervades the whole of the Buddhist life. Its context is given in such discourses as the two **Aparihāna Suttas**, where **the Aparihāna Sutta 1** (A 6.32) gives a more detailed exposition of the six conditions for non-decline,<sup>2</sup> while **the Aparihāna Sutta 2** (A 6.33) states them briefly.<sup>3</sup> The six conditions for non-decline (*aparihāniya dhamma*) are as follows:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| (1) respect for the Teacher  | <i>satthu, gāravatā,</i>                    |
| (2) respect for the Dharma   | <i>dhamma, garavatā,</i>                    |
| (3) respect for the Sangha   | <i>saṅgha, gāravatā,</i>                    |
| (4) respect for the training | <i>sikkhā, gāravatā,</i>                    |
| (5) respect for heedfulness  | <i>appamāda, gāravatā,</i>                  |
| (6) respect for hospitality  | <i>paṭisanthāra, gāravatā.</i> <sup>4</sup> |

These six conditions can be briefly explained as follows.

**1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE.** This teaching on respect is the “six directions” of Buddhist training. The first three kinds of respect are directed to the three jewels, taking them as the vision or ideals of our lives. The Buddha is our universal teacher and guide, the Dharma is the living truth he has discovered and left to us, as it were, as a spiritual legacy, that is, as a method of personal development. And the sangha is the holy community of saints who have attained the path, whose lives, conduct and attainments are an inspiration to our own practice.<sup>5</sup>

These six kinds of respect apply to both the training of monastics as well as that of the laity, since everyone is in need of awakening and is capable of doing so. The main difference between these two trainings is that while monastic training provides the ideal conditions for a direct path to awakening in this life itself, the lay training is for those who are still caught up with the world but are yet capable of healthily directing their energies to spiritual development. While the goal of the monastics should be arhathood or non-return, which entails meditation discipline, the goal of the laity should be at least that of streamwinning or once-return, which only demands moral virtue and mindfulness.<sup>6</sup>

For other suttas with *kula* in their names, see **the (Cira-ṭṭhita) Kula Sutta** (A 4.255) = SD 37.10 Intro (2).

### 2 Respect for the Teacher

**2.1** A traditional definition of “respect for the teacher” (*satthu, gāravatā*) is found in the Vibhaṅga Commentary. This is actually an explanation of its opposite, that is, “disrespect for the teacher” (*satthari agāravo*). A monk, while the Buddha is still living, does not attend to him, and does not show him deference by way of personal conduct, such as wearing sandals while walking with him when he is bare-foot, taking the high walk while he takes a low one, keeping both shoulders covered before him, and other

<sup>1</sup> See **Spiritual friendship: A textual study** = SD 34.1.

<sup>2</sup> A 6.32/3:330 f = SD 72.8. For other sets of 6 conditions for non-decline, see Vbh 381 (2 sets), the 1<sup>st</sup> set expl at VbhA 507. For the well known 5 sets of 7 conditions, and 1 set of 6 conditions, found in **Mahā,parinibbāna S**, see D 16.1.6-11/2:76-81 & SD 9 (10a).

<sup>3</sup> A 6.33/3:331 = SD 72.9.

<sup>4</sup> See **Love** = SD 38.4 (6).

<sup>5</sup> The set of 6 kinds of respect are also listed at: A 6.40/3:340, 7.56/4:84, 7.66/123-125 (passim); MA 3:395; SA 1:280, 312; Dhs 7; DhsA 53; J 5:428; Vbh 381; VbhA 507.

<sup>6</sup> See **Entering the stream** = SD 3.3.

external show of disrespect. After the Buddha has attained parinirvana, the monk fails to pay homage to him at a shrine (VbhA 507).

**2.2 Respect for the teacher** (*satthu, gāravatā*) specifically refers to giving the Buddha the highest priority in our lives. Since the Buddha is the fully self-awakened one, he is capable of being our flawless guide and inspiration. Although the Buddha has passed away into final nirvana, his life-history, personality and legends serve as viable guidelines for our own lives and awakening.

Respect for the Buddha means remembering him as he would have us do so. Firstly, the Buddha is born like any other human being, and through his personal effort, without any divine help or intervention, he realizes the nature of true reality, awakening from the virtual reality that constructs the kind of cyclic world we are caught up in. Through this liberating knowledge, the Buddha frees himself from all existential categories, and so rises even above any kind of divinity. He attains nirvana.

**2.3** Various suttas record the Buddha as declaring that “when the Tathagata [the Buddha thus come] is not being apprehended...as true and real<sup>7</sup> here in this very life,”<sup>8</sup> it is therefore *not* fitting even to describe him *apart* from this tetralemma<sup>9</sup> of logical truth, that is to say that

- |                   |                              |                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) the Tathagata | exists                       | after death, or            |
| (2) the Tathagata | does not exist               | after death, or            |
| (3) the Tathagata | both exists and not exist    | after death, or            |
| (4) the Tathagata | neither exists nor not exist | after death. <sup>10</sup> |

The true nature of the Buddha (that is, buddhahood) is said to be “inaccessible to discursive thought” (*atakkâvacara*).<sup>11</sup> The Buddha’s awakening (*bodhi*) is “beyond our range” (*avisaya*),<sup>12</sup> that is, our senses and language (and languages) are incapable of experiencing what is suprasensory and transcendental. However, we might get some hint of what the Buddha is *not* by way of figurative or mythical language.<sup>13</sup> However, it is a language we need to use with care and respect. “Care” meaning a mindful and calm focus on what we are talking or thinking about, and “respect” refers to letting go of all other concepts, except

<sup>7</sup> “As true and real,” *saccato thetato*; as at **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22.25/1:138; cf 22.36/1:140); **Yamaka S** (S 22.-85.34/3:112); **Anurādha S** (S 22.86.21/3:118 = S 44.2.21/4:384); **Titth’āyatana S** (A 3.61.2-4/1:174 f x3); Vbh 376 f (x4), 382 (x 6); Pug 3.17/38 (x12); Kvu 67 f (x13). Vbh:T tr *staccato thetato* as “firmly as truth” (Vbh:T 487).

<sup>8</sup> Be Ce Ke Se: *diṭṭhe’va dhamme saccato tathato tathāgate anupalabbhiyamāne*; Ee *diṭṭhe’va dhamme saccato thetato tathāgato anupalabbhiyamāno*. Cf **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22): “And bhikkhus, since in truth and in reality, one can find neither self nor what belongs to a self” (*attani ca bhikkhave attaniye ca saccato thetato anupalabbhamāne*, M 22.25/1:138,5-6 = SD 3.13) & “one thus gone, I say, is untraceable even here and now” (*diṭṭh’evāham bhikkhave dhamme tathāgatam ananuvejjo ti vadāmi*, M 22.36/1:140,6-7).

<sup>9</sup> This is the Greek term for what is well known in Skt as *castuṣkoṭi* (the 4 points), which in canonical Pali is *catu, -ṭhāna* (the 4 grounds), found throughout the Canon: **D** 1:27, 59, 188-191, 2:68, 3:135 f; **M** 1:157 f, 426-431, 484-486; **S** 2:222 f, 3:116 f, 119, 215-218, 258-260, 262 f, 4:286 f, 375-381, 384-402, 5:418, 448; **A** 2:41, 4:68 f, 5:31, 186 f, 193 f, 196-198; **U** 67; **Nm** 1:64, 184, 208, 290, 293, 300, 306, 319, 323, 326, 331; **Pm** 1:123, 151, 153-156, 158; **Dhs** 195, 198, 202, 208, 216; **Vbh** 340; **Kvu** 506, 624 f; **Miln** 145.

<sup>10</sup> In **Param,marāṇa S** (S 16.12/2:222 f) the Buddha mentions it to Mahā Kassapa; in **Anurādha S** (S 22.86/3:-116-119) = SD 21.13. The tetralemma is mentioned by lemma in 4 suttas in Saṃyutta (S 24.15-18/3:215 f). The **Abyākata Saṃyutta** contains some suttas dealing with it (S 44.2-8/4:381-397): see S:B 1080 n165. For a philosophical discussion, see K N Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:350 & Kügler 2003:100 f. For a detailed analysis of the 10 points in terms of the tetralemma, see **Māluṅkya,putta S** (M 63) @ SD 5.8 Intro (2).

<sup>11</sup> It 37,20\*; UA 391,32 (*nibbāṇānam*). Mostly preceded by *gambhīra santa paṇīta*, “profound, peaceful, subtle” (V 1:4,35, *dhammo*, cf Mvst 3:314,2) = D 2:36,3 = 37,24 (*dhammo*, glossed as “not to be farthomed or delved by thought, to be delved only through knowledge, *takkena avacaritabbo ogāhitabbo na hoti, nāṇen’eva avacaritabbo*, DA; cf NmA 2:316,19) = M 1:167,32 (MA) = S 1:136,10 (SA) ≠ M 1:487,7 ≠ 2:172,31; A2:189,15 (*atthapadam*, glossed as “one is unable to grasps the sense by grasping it through thought, *takkena naya-g, gāhena gaheṭum na sakkā hoti*); D 1:12,20 (*dhammā*, glossed as “not to be delved by thought, as it is in the range of supreme knowledge,” *uttama, nāṇa, visayattā na takkena avacaritabbā*, DA).

<sup>12</sup> That is, anything improper or impossible (S 4:15,21 = 67,21 = 5:109,27 = A 5:50,17; Vism 300,21\*).

<sup>13</sup> See **Buddhism as myth** = SD 36.1.

reflecting on what we might get when all thoughts and concepts are removed and we directly experience what the Buddha himself has realized.

**2.4** We are disrespecting the Buddha when we try to present him *less* than what he is, or *more* than what he has declared of his awakening. To see the Buddha “less” than what he really is, is to see him merely in statues and stones, or as someone we pray to for success, succour, or supremacy, or to see him as a mere “human,” as if his awakening is simply an intellectual attainment to be philosophized or dismissed. Whatever we try to speak or verbalize of the Buddha only reflects our own minds, not true awakening.

To make the Buddha “more” of what he is, is to view him in the “power” mode,<sup>14</sup> as some kind of supreme being, an *ādi, buddha*, or to redefine that *bodhisattva* as being on par with the Buddha or that includes him. In linguistic terms, we could perhaps say that the Buddha is *sub specie aeternitatis*,<sup>15</sup> one of a kind. Indeed, the greatest respect, the “supreme worship,” that we can show the Buddha is *not* to worship him, but to practise the Dharma, his teaching.<sup>16</sup>

Those who caste new Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have, in some strange way, caste aside the historical and true Buddha. It is rhetorically nice to say such things as that “there may be many Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and deities, but the Buddha is one.” The point is that we have turned away from the Buddha; we have *doubted* him. To truly respect the Buddha is to work at clarifying any doubt we may have of him, especially regarding his full awakening,<sup>17</sup> that is, the possibility of any single-minded human to rise above this world and even divinity itself, and to be fully liberated in true reality.<sup>18</sup>

### 3 Respect for the Dharma

**3.1** A traditional definition of “**respect for the Dharma**” (*dhamma.garavatā*) can be deduced from the Vibhaṅga Commentary, in its definition of its opposite, that is, “disrespect for the Dharma” (*dhamme agāravo*). Here, it is said that when the Dharma is being taught, a monk does not carefully listen to it, but sits chattering. In our own times, we might say that those who use their handphones or let it rudely ring while a Dharma talk or meditation is in progress, is certainly disrespecting the Dharma and the rest of the audience. (VbhA 507)

**3.2** **Respect for the Dharma** is, following what we have discussed above [2], to practise the Dharma. This is to *practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, dwelling in accordance with the Dharma*.<sup>19</sup> An important part of this supreme worship is, of course, meditation.

<sup>14</sup> See **The Buddha as a myth** = SD 36.2 (5.1.2).

<sup>15</sup> This is Spinoza’s (1632-77) term, meaning “as a particular manifestation of a universal law, without any relation to time.” See **The Buddha as myth** = SD 36.2 (2.1).

<sup>16</sup> D 16.5.2-3/2:138 & SD 9(7b). See the story of Dhamm’ārāma: Intro (14). Cf **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35), where in a similar connection, the arhat is said to have accomplished in the 3 supremacies (*anuttariya*) (M 35.26b/1:235) = SD 26.5. See **Gāraṇa S** (S 6.2) = SD 12.3 (2).

<sup>17</sup> See eg **Dīgha, jānu S** (A 8.54.12/4:284) = SD 5.10. *Saddhā*, that is, *ākāravati saddhā*, faith founded on seeing; synonymous with *avecca, pasāda*, that is, faith through understanding. There are 2 kinds of faith: (1) “rootless faith (*amūlaka, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, or blind faith (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, sad-dhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8, 401,23). M 1:401 AA 3/227 DhA 1/72 5/81 UA 369 (all Se). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy).

<sup>18</sup> Having no doubt in the Buddha’s virtues, and wise faith in his full awakening, is of course the remedy to fetter of doubt (*vicikicchā*). The streamwinner (*soṭāpanna*) is said to have abandoned **the three fetters** of self-identity view (or more simply, self-view) (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), and attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b-, bata, parāmāsa*). In this connection, see below, the deeper significance of respect for the other 2 jewels (the Dharma and the Sangha). See **Entering the stream** = SD 3.3 esp (5.2).

<sup>19</sup> D 16.5.2-3/2:138 & SD 9(7b). On the story of Dhamm’ārāma, see Intro (14). Cf **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35), where in a similar connection, the arhat is said to have accomplished in the 3 supremacies (*anuttariya*) (M 35.26b/1:235) = SD 26.5.

When we close our eyes and calm ourselves in the bliss of meditation, we are truly “worshipping” the Buddha, as it were. For, such a worship propagates and preserves the Dharma, which even the Buddha places above himself.<sup>20</sup>

**3.3** We must present the Dharma just as it is, say, in terms of its nine virtues.<sup>21</sup> We should never construe the Dharma to be *less* than what is really is, or “more” than what is really is. To “lessen” the Dharma is to present it as some kind of intellectual remark, or dismiss it as being alike, equal to, or less than some other teaching or idea. The Dharma should be understood for itself, that is, as a tool for awakening. It is *the* path to nirvana. Not all roads lead to nirvana; many run in circles, or into dead ends; others are full of diversions and dangers.

To see the Dharma as “more” than what it really is, is to blow it up into some dogmatic system that belittles other teachings, especially the Buddha’s own simple teachings, claiming that it is “inferior,” or out of date and needs updating, or that the historical Buddha is dead, and that some local holy man is the new Buddha. No such teaching is found in the early Buddhist canon. In fact, there are many warnings by the Buddha in the suttas against watering down the Dharma or side-lining it.<sup>22</sup>

The Dharma is about becoming less and less *busy* with people and things, or even with ourselves. Only in letting go of “busyness” do we have all the time in the world for what really matter in our lives. The Dharma is definitely *not* commercial business.<sup>23</sup> The Dharma is free, and it sets us free. The greatest respect we can show to the Dharma is to practise it just as it is, and to share it freely with others.

**3.4 The highest respect for the Dharma** is that of self-reliance and unrelenting personal effort in self-awakening. In other words, we neither rely on any external agency, nor do we externalize what should be a *direct experience* of true reality. We need to clear up the lenses with which we view the external world, and cut down on our projecting of inner images onto our experiences.<sup>24</sup>

When we do not understand enough of the Dharma, compounded by our need for self-fulfillment, we tend to *ritualize* our efforts in personal development, and *externalize* qualities which we should be internalizing for ourselves. We, for example, resort to such things as mantras, images and personalities, treating them as efficacious in themselves, instead of seeking to understand how our minds work. This is, of course, attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*). The streamwinner (*sotāpanna*) is said to have abandoned **the three fetters** of self-identity view (or more simply, self-view), doubt, and attachment to rituals and vows.<sup>25</sup>

## 4 Respect for the Sangha

**4.1** As in the first two “respects,” the Vibhaṅga Commentary defines “respect for the Sangha” (*saṅgha, gāravatā*), only in its external form, such as walking, sitting or standing in an appropriate manner, or keeping both shoulders covered, or carrying an umbrella or wearing sandals, in the midst of an order. These are, of course, against some of the Sekhiya rules,<sup>26</sup> the least serious of the Pāṭimokkha rules, dealing with external decorum. (VbhA 507)

**4.2 The conventional sangha.** In the context of early Buddhist practice, respect for the Sangha means living in harmony within the rules and conduct of the monastic order, **the sangha**. A Buddhist monastic is a renunciant, one who has left the *biological* family, for a more embracing and inclusive *spiritual* family. In other words, a monk or nun does not really abandon his parents, siblings or relatives,

<sup>20</sup> See **Gārava S** (S 6.2/1:138-140) = SD 12.3. See **The teacher or the teaching?** = SD 3.14; also **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1) = SD 24.11 Intro (1.3).

<sup>21</sup> See **Dhammānussatī** = SD 15.9.

<sup>22</sup> See **The Dharma-ending age** = SD 1.10.

<sup>23</sup> See **Right livelihood** = SD 37.8 (1.5).

<sup>24</sup> See **Saññā** = SD 17.4.

<sup>25</sup> In this connection, on the deeper significance of respect for the other 2 jewels (the Buddha and the Sangha), see “respect for the Buddha” above, and “respect for the Sangha below. See also **Entering the stream** = SD 3.3 esp (5.3).

<sup>26</sup> On the Sekhiya, dhamma, see eg **Anubaddha Bhikkhu S** (S 47.3) & SD 24.6a (2.3.1(4)).

but he treats lay devotees who are elderly as his parents, those about his age as his siblings, and those younger as his own children.

This approach underlies the “spiritual accessibility” for anyone who needs spiritual help from the renunciants. Such a system only works, free from abuse and dysfunction, when there is mutual respect between the monastics and the lay. The monastics, on their part, earn this respect by keeping to the monastic code, so that their various moral virtues are “unbroken, untorn, unmixed, spotless, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, bringing about concentration.”<sup>27</sup>

**4.3 Following the example of true sanghins.** The layman, on his part, keeps to the five precepts to his best ability. Inspired by the moral virtue of the sangha-spirited renunciants, he himself practises renouncing unwholesome bodily and verbal habits. Inspired by the idea that the sangha members have renounced their own family links and abandoned attachment to sensual-pleasures, the laity regularly reflects on the *impermanent* nature of the body, so that he abandons any self-identity view.

In other words, while the ordained sangha members (the conventional sangha) rightly comprises those who aspire to abandon all sensual desires through deep meditation and dhyana, as the basis for attaining of arhathood or non-return, the laity, through *the perception of impermanence*,<sup>28</sup> aspires to attain stream-winning or once-return. The streamwinner (*sotāpanna*) is said to have abandoned **the three fetters** of self-identity view (or more simply, self-view), doubt, and attachment to rituals and vows.<sup>29</sup>

**4.4 The fourfold congregation.** In our own times, respect for the sangha entails an understanding of the historical perspective of the monastic sangha. That, in early Buddhism, the word *saṅgha* refers specifically to the monastic sangha, that is celibate, does not handle money, nor own property, but live as renunciants fully dedicated to attaining awakening in this life itself.

The term “assembly” or “congregation” (*parisa*) is used collectively for the monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen collectively. In the Buddha’s time and in the suttas, the *parisa* only includes saints, both monastic and lay. This noble community (*ariya,saṅgha*) can be today addressed as “the sangha of saints.” This is the *true sangha* that we take refuge in,<sup>30</sup> not the conventional sangha of monastics who are ordained but not awakened at all, not even as streamwinners. The conventional monastics of today can be collectively known as the “community of monastics,” while the fourfold assembly of Buddhists today of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen can be simply called “the Buddhist community.” The proper use of Dharma terminology<sup>31</sup> is a gesture of respect for Buddhist history and teaching, and this is helpful in keeping alive the true spirit of the Dharma-Vinaya.

## 5 Respect for the training

**5.1** Respect for the training (*sikkhā,gāravatā*) refers directly to keeping our body, speech and mind fully in the three trainings (VbhA 507), that is, in moral virtue, mental cultivation and wisdom. In the first training, in moral virtue, **the Sekha Sutta** (M 53) says,

<sup>27</sup> (**Agata,phala**) **Mahā,nāma S** (A 6.10.5/3:286) = SD 15.3. “Unbroken,...giving rise to concentration,” *akhaṇdehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññūpasatṭhehi aparāmatṭhehi samādhi,samvattanikehi*. See UA 268. For details, see Vism 1.143-161/51-58 & 7.101-106/221 f.

<sup>28</sup> On the perception of impermanence (*anicca,sañña*), see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225) = SD 16.7.

<sup>29</sup> In this connection, on the deeper significance of respect for the other 2 jewels (the Buddha and the Dharma), see “respect for the Buddha” and “respect for the Dharma” above. See also **Entering the stream** = SD 3.3 esp (5.1).

<sup>30</sup> See Dh 190; Vv 617. Although the sutta stock passage on refuge-taking invariably has the phrase *Esāham bhante bhagavantam saraṇam gacchāmi dhammañ ca bhikkhu,saṅghañ ca* (eg D 2.101/1:85 = SD 8.10), ie “order of monks,” all Comys invariably gloss this phrase as referring to the “sangha of saints.” On the 9 qualities of the noble sangha, see **Aṭṭha Puggala S 1** (A 8.59/4:292) = SD 15.10a.

<sup>31</sup> On proper usage of Buddhist terms such as “sangha,” see **Myth in Buddhism** = SD 36.1 (1.8.3.4).

...a noble disciple is morally virtuous:<sup>32</sup> he dwells restrained by the restraint of the Pāṭimokkha [the monastic code];<sup>33</sup> he is accomplished in conduct and resort; and he sees danger in the slightest fault; he trains himself by undertaking the training-rules.<sup>34</sup> (M 53.7/1:355) = SD 21.14

**5.2 The Patta,kamma Sutta** (A 4.16) gives a very interesting definition of meditation for the laity, directed to the overcoming of the five mental hindrances, thus:

**8a** Indeed, houselord, when this noble disciple,

(1) having known that his mind is overcome by the mental impurity of *covetousness and rampant greed*, he abandons the mental impurity of covetousness and rampant greed.

(2) Having known that his mind is overcome by the mental impurity of *ill will*, he abandons the mental impurity of ill will.

(3) Having known that his mind is overcome by the mental impurity of *sloth and torpor*, he abandons the mental impurity of sloth and torpor.

(4) Having known that his mind is overcome by the mental impurity of *restlessness and remorse*, he abandons the mental impurity of restlessness and remorse.

(5) Having known that his mind is overcome by the mental impurity of *doubt*, he abandons the mental impurity of doubt. (A 4.61.8a/2:67) = SD 37.12

The Sutta then explains that with this awareness, the lay practitioner is able to abandon these mental impurities or hindrances, and be on the way to mental focus, even dhyana.

**5.3** For the fruits of the training in wisdom, we can turn to **the Dīgha,jānu Sutta** (A 8.54), which defines the accomplishment or excellence in wisdom as follows:

Here, Vyagghapajja, the son of family is wise, possesses wisdom directed<sup>35</sup> to the rising and falling away (of phenomena) that is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering. (A 8.54.15/4:284 f) = SD 5.10

Respect for the training, then, means to spend some quality time in looking for a workable strategy in mental cultivation. This strategy can be found in the suttas, as shown here, or we could approach a wise and experienced teacher who is willing and able to coach us as a spiritual friend.<sup>36</sup>

## 6 Respect for heedfulness

**6.1 The Vibhaṅga** defines “heedlessness” (*pamāda*) as “the lack of mindfulness, the lack of constant mindfulness, lack of actively remembering, lack of bearing in mind, superficiality, forgetfulness”<sup>37</sup> (Vbh 360), the Commentary does not elaborate.

**6.2** Respect for heedfulness (*appamāda, gāravatā*) simply means not looking down on our ability for spiritual growth. As a human being, we are well equipped with a body and a mind that are capable of calming itself (the body) and clearing itself (the mind). Heedfulness (*appamāda*) means not being distracted by our physical senses (by what we see, hear, smell, taste or touch) nor drawn away by our mindlessness. It means regularly keeping our mind in the here and now, watching closely what is going on in our bodies and minds, noticing patterns of their habitual behaviour, abandoning the negative and cultivating the wholesome.

<sup>32</sup> “Morally virtuous,” *sīlavā*. Cf **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.43-62/1:63-69 = SD 8.10): see §23 n on “conduct.”

<sup>33</sup> On the Pāṭimokkha, see **Anubuddha Bhikkhu S** (S 47.3) @ SD 24.6a (2.2.1(1)).

<sup>34</sup> As in **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235) = SD 24.10c. For a fuller def of the 3 higher trainings (*ti adhi, sikkhā*) in terms of the 4 types of saints, see **(Sekha) Uddesa S** (A 3.85/1:231 f) = SD 3.3(2).

<sup>35</sup> On directed cultivation, see further **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 47.10/5:154-157) = SD 24.2 Intro (1.2).

<sup>36</sup> See **Spiritual friendship: A textual study** = SD 34.1.

<sup>37</sup> *Asati ananussati appaṭissati asaraṇatā adhāraṇatā pilāpanatā sammussanatā*.

**6.3** The main strategy is to work at cutting down the influence of the three unwholesome roots—greed, hate and delusion—on our lives. If we are effective in the first three respects—towards the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha—we are also working at overcoming self-identity view, doubt, and attachment to rules and vows, that is, attaining streamwinning.<sup>38</sup> Or, we can go on to work for the attaining to once-return, with only one more life to go before we awaken to liberation.<sup>39</sup>

In simple terms, heedfulness refers to being constantly mindful, and more specifically the practice of meditation. In the case of the laity, this would refer especially to the practice of the perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*), as a commitment to attaining streamwinning in this life itself. In an important way, this is closely related to respect for the Dharma.

## 7 Respect for hospitality

**7.1** In the suttas and Commentaries, hospitality (*paṭisanthāra*) is often paired with “friendliness” (*sākhalya*) (eg D 3:213; DhsA 53). In other words, friendliness and hospitality are twin qualities for a monastic specifically, and for the laity generally. The abstract noun *sākhalya* or *sākhalla* comes from the adjective, *sakhīla*, meaning “kindly in speech, congenial”<sup>40</sup> (PED).

*Sākhalya* means “friendship,” especially when evident or expressed through speech,<sup>41</sup> but can have derived senses such as “tameness” (of a horse, M 1:446), “mild words” (MA 3:162) and “polished speech” (*maṭṭha,vacana*, J 4:58).

**7.2** “Hospitality” (*paṭisanthāra*) is often defined as being of two kinds: worldly hospitality (*āmisā,-paṭisanthāra*) and spiritual hospitality (*dhamma,paṭisanthāra*).<sup>42</sup> “Worldly hospitality” simply means family duties, public service, common courtesy, civil or proper conduct in society, including keeping society crime-free (DA 3:981).

“Spiritual hospitality” includes being favourably disposed to worthy renunciants. This is clearly defined in practical terms in **the Sigāl’ovāda Sutta** (D 31), as follows

In five ways, young houselord, recluses and brahmins [religious renunciants and practitioners] as *the direction above* [zenith],<sup>43</sup> should be ministered to by **the son of family**, thus:

- (a) By physical acts of lovingkindness.
- (b) By words of lovingkindness.
- (c) By thoughts of lovingkindness.
- (d) By keeping the house open to them.
- (e) By providing them with material needs. (D 31.33/3:191) = SD 4.1

**7.3** Hospitality in the spiritual sense goes even beyond civil manners and proper support of renunciants. It has more to do with a wholesome open-mindedness towards true renunciants and Dharma teachers, with a willingness to attentively listen to the Dharma, to remember it, to reflect on it, and to put it into practice as appropriate. The 12-stage “gradual training” of the ideal student is given in **the Caṅki Sutta** (M 95),<sup>44</sup> with a shorter 7-stage version given in **the Dhammaññū Sutta** (A 7.64).<sup>45</sup>

## 8 Rajah Pasenadi

According to the Dhammapada Commentary, the teachings of **the (Navaka Upagantabba) Kula Sutta** (A 9.17) are given in connection with rajah Pasenadi’s offering of alms to the monks in his palace

<sup>38</sup> See **Entering the stream** = SD 3.3.

<sup>39</sup> On the once-returner (*sākadāgāmi*), see **Layman and dhyana** = SD 8.5 (3.1).

<sup>40</sup> V 2.11; D 1:116; J 1:202, 376; Miln 207; Pv 4.1.33, where comy glosses as “mild, gentle” (*mudu*, PvA 230).

<sup>41</sup> D 3:213; DA 1:287, 3:981; A 1:94; Dhs 1343; DhsA 53; J 4:57.

<sup>42</sup> A 1:93; Vbh 360; Dhs 230; DA 3:981; AA 2:161; DhA 4:111; DhsA 397.

<sup>43</sup> “Zenith,” ie the sky above, representing the potential for personal and spiritual development and liberation.

<sup>44</sup> (M 70.23-24/1:480 = SD 11.1) = (M 95.20/2:173 = SD 21.15).

<sup>45</sup> A 7.64/4:113-117 & SD 30.10 (5).

at Sāvattthī (DhA 4.3). It is said that everyday 2000 monks would go to Anātha,piṇḍika's house for alms, 500 to Culla Anātha,piṇḍika's house, and the same number to the houses of Visākhā and of Suppa,dāsā.

Rajah Pasenadi, impressed by this, invites the Buddha and a thousand monks to the palace daily for their meal. The Buddha, however, declines, saying that he must go wherever the public requests him. The rajah then asks for one monk to come to the palace for alms. The Buddha sends Ānanda and a retinue of 500 monks.

For seven days, the rajah served the monks himself, but from the eighth day onwards, he neglected the monks and left no instructions. By the third day after that, only Ānanda remains at the alms-offering. He does so out of his aspiration to protect the faith of families. However, the rajah on discovering that only Ānanda is left, is angry, and complains to the Buddha.<sup>46</sup>

The Buddha explains to the rajah that the monks lack confidence in the rajah (indirectly alluding to the latter's negligence), and gives the instructions of the (Navaka Upagantabba) Kula Sutta. Then the Buddha relates a story of the past where a recluse, Kesava, was left alone with a single pupil, Kappa, in a busy and noisy place, which his 500 pupils have found inconducive and returned to their ashram in the Himalayas. The recluse's health is badly affected and has to return to the mountains.<sup>47</sup>

The rajah perseveres in his efforts to win the confidence of the Buddha's monks. It is on this occasion, it is said that he decides to marry a Sakya lady, so that he is bonded by marriage with the Sakyas. However, unknown to him, Mahānāma, the leader of the Sakyas (proudly endogamous, yet not wishing to anger the rajah), surreptitiously gives away a half-caste woman, Vasabha,khattiyā to the rajah. Out of the union, prince Viḍuḍabha is born. Later, when he discovers his real origins, he, upon seizing the throne, massacres the Sakyas.<sup>48</sup>

— — —

## The Discourse on the Family (Worth Approaching, the Nines)

A 9.17/4:387 f

### A family to be avoided

1 Bhikshus, if one has not approached a family possessing nine qualities, let one *not* approach it; or if one has done so, let one *not sit down*. What are the nine?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 (1) They do not rise pleasantly.                                | <i>na manāpena paccuṭṭhenti</i>          |
| (2) They do not greet pleasantly.                                 | <i>na manāpena abhivādentī</i>           |
| (3) They do not offer a seat pleasantly.                          | <i>na manāpena āsanam denti</i>          |
| (4) If they have them (seats) they hide them.                     | <i>santam assa pariguhanti</i>           |
| (5) If they have much, they give little.                          | <i>bahukam pi thokam denti</i>           |
| (6) Though they have what is choice,<br>they give what is coarse. | <i>paṇītam pi lūkham denti</i>           |
| (7) They give disrespectfully, without respect.                   | <i>asakkaccam denti no sakkaccam</i>     |
| (8) They do not sit up close to hear the Dharma.                  | <i>na upanisīdanti dhamma-s,savanāya</i> |
| (9) They are not attentive to what is spoken.                     | <i>bhāsitam assa na sussūsanti</i>       |

Bhikshus, if one has not approached a family possessing these nine qualities, let one not approach it; or if one has done so, let one not sit down.

<sup>46</sup> DhA 4.3/1:339-342.

<sup>47</sup> DhA 4.3.3a/1:342-345.

<sup>48</sup> DhA 4.3/1:356-362.



A family worth approaching

3 Bhikshus, if one has not approached a family possessing nine qualities, let one *approach* it; or if one has done so, let one *sit down*. What are the nine?

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 4 (1) They rise pleasantly.                             | <i>manāpena paccuṭṭhenti</i>          |
| (2) They greet pleasantly.                              | <i>manāpena abhivādentī</i>           |
| (3) They offer a seat pleasantly.                       | <i>manāpena āsanam denti</i>          |
| (4) If they have them (seats) they hide them not. [388] | <i>santam assa na pariguhanti</i>     |
| (5) If they have much, they give much.                  | <i>bahukam pi bahukam denti</i>       |
| (6) They have what is choice, they give what is choice. | <i>paṇītam pi paṇītam denti</i>       |
| (7) They give respectfully, not without respect.        | <i>sakkaccam denti no asakkaccam</i>  |
| (8) They sit up close to hear the Dharma.               | <i>upanisīdanti dhamma-s,savanāya</i> |
| (9) They are attentive to what is spoken.               | <i>bhāsitam assa sussūsanti</i>       |

Bhikshus, if one has not approached a family possessing these nine qualities, let one approach it; or if one has done so, let one sit down.

— evam —

111119; 111128; 111217; 120420; 120424 RAT; 120428a